

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, AUGUST 29, 2005

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Kirk. Raser, Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt, Sullebarger, and Wallace present. Absent: Bloomfield, Chatterjee, and Kreider,

MINUTES

The Board unanimously approved the minutes of August 1, 2005 (motion by Raser, second by Spraul-Schmidt) and those of August 15, 2005 (motion by Sullebarger, second by Raser).

PRESENTATION BY CINCINNATI PUBLIC SCHOOLS ON THE STATUS OF PROPOSED NEW BUILDING FOR CREATIVE & PERFORMING ARTS

Mr. Senhauser informed the attendees that representatives of the Cincinnati Public Schools would be presenting plans for the new School for Creative & Performing Arts. The new Washington Park Elementary School will not be presented at this meeting. Mr. Michael Burson, Director of Facilities for CPS explained that given the several issues recently raised by the community concerning the Washington Park School, the School Board has decided to reevaluate its options and revisit its plans for Over-the-Rhine.

Mr. Jeff Dodge, of Cole/Russell Architects presented plans, elevation drawings and a model of the new K-12 school for the SCPA. The new school will be located between Central Parkway and Twelfth Street between Race and Elm Streets south of Washington Park and will replace the existing school at 1310 Sycamore Street in Pendleton. The new design is three stories tall with a formal entrance on Central Parkway. In plan, a dominant zinc-plated arc turns the corner of Central and Elm and links a brick classroom wing at Race Street with performance and studio spaces to the west. A second entrance on the north side opens to green space and surface parking facing Washington Park. A shielded service area is on Elm Street. The plan will require the demolition of several historic buildings on Race and Elm Streets.

Mr. Kirk complimented the architects on relating the new building to the size and scale of other structures on Elm and Central and stressed the importance of maintaining the language of the neighborhood and the historic significance of Over-the-Rhine. Mr. Dodge explained that the design team had looked closely at neighboring buildings and had incorporated elements from the brick on Music Hall to the arched windows of the YMCA building. In answer to Mr. Raser, Mr. Dodge said that the long, horizontal window facing Twelfth Street lighted a studio and reflected that use. As many other elements in the design, this is being reconsidered.

Mr. Senhauser applauded the effort to design a contemporary building compatible with its historic surroundings without resorting to replication or being intimidated by the neighboring buildings. He said that he appreciated the allusions to adjacent structures, but thought the shallow arches on the first floor seemed somewhat out of context. He indicated that the surface parking disrupted the connection to Washington Park and diminished the northern entryway. He suggested that a hedgerow along Twelfth Street might screen the parking without hiding the school from view and an opening in the hedge could define and emphasize the entryway.

The Board generally agreed that the architects had done a commendable job in resolving a difficult site and complex program with the scale and rhythm of the historic area.

Architect Ken Jones, representing a coalition of groups in Over-the-Rhine commended CPS for its decision to reconsider the school needs for the neighborhood. He said that the primary entrance to the school should be oriented to Washington Park, not Central Parkway. Mr. Jones

also stated that no demolition of historic buildings should be permitted until a final design has been approved. Matt Scheidt resident of the neighborhood and architect stated that he agreed with Mr. Jones, but does not feel the new building really compliments the neighborhood.

Margaret Warminski of Cincinnati Preservation Association concurred that no demolition permits for the contributing structures should be issued without the final design approval. She appreciated that the architects have maintained the Central Parkway streetscape, but felt the primary façade should face Washington Park and be oriented toward Music Hall.

Marge Hammelrath of the OTR Foundation asked whether an underground parking facility had been considered. Mr. Dodge answered that earlier designs had incorporated such a structure, but that it was not economically feasible. He acknowledged that orientation to Washington Park and on-site parking remains a challenge and that options for closing Twelfth Street (perhaps with retractable bollards) or reorienting open spaces were being explored. He defended the concept of dual entries off the Park and Central Parkway.

Ms. Sullebarger said that from the beginning planning has focused on connecting the new SCPA school with Music Hall. She said she agreed that the school in its new location should be oriented toward Music Hall and Washington Park and that the surface parking disrupted that orientation.

Mr. Dodge reminded all that the design is still a work in progress and that he and CPS would do their best to address concerns from all factions.

BOARD ACTION

No official Board action is required at this time.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 2303 GRANDVIEW AVENUE, WINDOW REPLACEMENT, UPLANDS HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a report on an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to replacing 93 wood windows at 2303 Grandview Avenue with vinyl windows. She indicated that staff had earlier approved a COA for a wood replacement window, but that the owner, the Sisters of Mercy had reapplied for a less expensive alternative. Ms Kellam indicated that repairing the original wood windows or replacing them with wood windows would be the most appropriate option, but that the difference in cost is significant (\$37,000). The guidelines do permit metal or vinyl windows, if painted. She showed a sample window. In answer to Ms. Sullebarger, Ms. Kellam said she had inspected the windows on the site and that from what she had seen, their replacement was justified. .

Donn Groene, representing Sisters of Mercy of the Americas was present to address questions from the Board. Mr. Groene said that the Sisters of Mercy is dedicated to maintaining the property and historic neighborhood, but that a wood replacement window was prohibitively expensive. Mr. Senhauser pointed out that the Board had reviewed various manufactures' brochures and developed a list of windows that met the guidelines for the historic districts. He explained that the Board had determined that the window the applicant proposes did not meet the guidelines, but had identified other vinyl products that did. Mr. Groene said that he was unaware of such a list, but would like a copy. Ms. Kellam agreed to review the list and brochures with him. Mr. Senhauser suggested that replacement sash might better meet the need at a lower cost.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously with amendment (motion by Sullebarger, Spraul-Schmidt second) to deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for the new windows as proposed and encouraged the

applicant to submit a new application for replacement units selected from the approved manufacturer lists.

ADJOURN

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

Date: _____